



taylor'd ERGO TIMES



Are your young workers at risk of strains/sprains?

In our last issue, we talked about technique training, and how to implement it. Recently, the Ontario Ministry of Labour has been focused on “vulnerable” or “new” workers. From their website (http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/news/2013/bg_vulnerable20130510.php): “From May to August 2013, the ministry will be focusing on employment standards violations in sectors known to employ a high proportion of vulnerable employees.... These sectors include:

- salons, spas, nail salons
- manufacturing and distribution
- fast food, restaurants
- construction sites
- recreation centres
- farming
- gyms, pools, bowling alleys”

This category includes summer students, of course. It also includes workers who have been re-assigned to a new job within the facility, as often happens with layoffs or vacation coverage. So even if you don't hire summer students, chances are that you do have “new workers” in your workforce during the summer vacation season.

Employers need to ensure that these workers have the skills, training, and equipment necessary to do their jobs safely. (**Not** as shown in the “clipart” above right!!) When you look at the injury stats for your workforce, chances are that new workers are at higher risk than other, more experienced workers. You may also find that the most common type of injury that they experience is “strains/sprains”. If this is the case, please consider how you train them for their “new” jobs.

We've been doing some really interesting (and challenging) work lately, in the area of “best practices”. It's easy enough for an ergonomist to come up with a presentation on how to lift, or how to swing a sledgehammer, or how to push or pull a wrench. In school, we all learned about ideal “textbook” biomechanics. Haven't we all sat through a seminar on how to lift safely? However, in the real world, workers often choose methods that are more efficient, or they devise methods that are really the only conceivable way to get the job done.

Our mission:

Inspiring, building, and supporting partnership between your organisation and our innovative team to advance ergonomics excellence.

Our team:

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All of our ergonomists are members of:





Sometimes, it's frustrating for new ergonomists (fresh out of school) to try to convince workers to use a method that takes more energy. It's also frustrating for experienced workers to be coached by an ergonomist who looks like s/he has never put in a full day of manual labour.

When a client asks us to identify best practices, we are extremely careful to evaluate and understand the current method, before proposing a "better" method. Often, the "textbook" promotes a method that isn't really practical in the workplace. For example, an ergonomics student would tell you that a worker should have a firm footing, and should align him/herself squarely with the target, before swinging a sledgehammer. However, when the target is 3 meters above the ground, in the middle of a field, this advice is not very useful. What is the best practice in this scenario? (And, what other solutions should we also work toward?)

Our new "best practice" reporting template requires our ergonomists to photograph and analyse the current practice, as well as the proposed practice, so that everyone can see how (or if) it really is better. Once we've identified the best practice, training is easy to develop, and easy to "sell" to the workers, because it truly is safer!

Call us for help with identifying best practices, and customizing training for your new workers.

Fleet Vehicle Selection and Driver Sit-Fits

Another hot topic lately has been vehicle ergonomics. A few clients have sought our input on fleet vehicle selection, so we've been refining our **vehicle comparison** methods and reports...we've compared different passenger cars, SUVs, vans, and city buses. It is amazing what a difference a few centimeters can make, when it comes to the position of the gas pedal, or the head clearance for ingress and egress! We can tell you which vehicle (of your fleet) can best fit a particular worker, or which vehicle (of those you are choosing between) has features that will accommodate more workers.



We've also been working on making our "sit fit" process more objective. For years we've been working one-on-one with drivers to ensure that they are adjusting the driver compartment for optimum comfort and safety. Drivers are often surprised that their vehicle offers adjustments that they didn't know about, or that they can steer with their arms much closer to their sides than they thought, by tilting the steering wheel and using a "shuffle" method. Making these adjustments is very rewarding, and has an immediate impact on the driver's comfort.

However, clients have recently challenged us to answer the question, "**Is this vehicle accommodating this worker?**" After we've adjusted everything as much as possible, is the worker at a high risk of injury if s/he drives like this? This is a difficult question to answer. We have excellent guidelines for material handling, for applying forces in different directions, and for repetitive awkward postures. We, at Taylor'd Ergo, consider ourselves pretty good at giving "go-no go" advice on these types of concerns—we're not at all reluctant to report that a job needs to be fixed if the risk is high, or that it is fine the way it is, if that's how the analysis comes out. But driving postures are not often repetitive or prolonged, nor are they forceful. So we've had to do a lot more research to find tools to allow us to assess the fit *objectively*.

We have been able to answer these "sit-fit" questions by assessing the postural demands of driving on the wrists, elbows, shoulders, and back using a biomechanical model. We can assess egress demands using the model as well. We can "harvest" some objective criteria, such as seat pan depth requirements, from office ergo standards. (A shallow front-back seat pan is a common issue for tall drivers in passenger vehicles. If the seat pan does not support the thigh properly, the knee will "roll out", and this will create issues at the knee and hip over time.) We continue to work on our methods, but as we do so, we are gaining some great collective experience in this area!

Finally, **training** for drivers has also been a recurring request, recently. Once the vehicle selection and driver fit has been taken care of, it's important to ensure that all drivers know how and why to adjust the driving compartment, and have the skills to safely perform any manual demands associated with their jobs (such as handcart use, manual handling, safe ingress and egress, etc.) We've been developing customized training for groups of drivers, and the feedback has been great!

Newsletter logistics...

Electronic: We're happy to send you a hard copy if you prefer to read it on paper, but we also distribute the newsletter electronically. You can also download it from our website at www.taylordergo.com Just let us know your preference!

Your address: If your mailing address is incorrect, please let us know by emailing (info@taylordergo.com or faxing (519 632 7469) a correction. We'll enter you into a sweatshirt draw. Congrats to Kris Kiviaho, of Huron Lodge Community Service Board, who earned a shirt this month by requesting an electronic copy instead of paper.

After you've read it: Please send the newsletter along to a colleague, post it on your safety board, take it home for your family, or leave it in your lunch room. When everyone is done with it, please recycle!



Blogging



We have been regularly adding to our blog, and we hope that some people are “following” our conversations at www.taylordergo.com/blog. The following topics have been tackled recently:

- Touch screen PCs
- Ergonomics and Work System Design – May 24 Webinar Highlights
- Garden, biomechanically!
- Manufacturing Innovation Summit (May 31) Keynote Summary
- Designing for “Joe Average”
- 1000 Words—Photography and ergonomics
- Thoughts of summer—planning for heat stress
- Ergonomics and pride of workmanship
- Move over, Goldilocks!

Free Ergo Speaker

If your professional association is looking for a speaker on an “ergo” topic, please contact Carrie in our office. We would be happy to come out to speak with your colleagues! (Of course, we’re hoping that some of them might be interested in asking some questions about our services after the presentation.) If you are within an hour radius of one of our offices, we can probably come at no charge!

Driving the Ergo Message Home

We’ve hidden these words in the puzzle below. When you’ve found all of the words, you should find the solution to the riddle below, in the “leftover” letters.

ADJUST	FLEET	KNOB	RATE	SHOP	THIGHS
BACKREST	GOOD	LIGHT	REACH	SHOULDERS	VEHICLE
CLEARANCE	GRIP	LUMBAR	RELAX	SITFIT	VIEW
CLIMB	HANDS	MOST	ROLLOUT	SMALL	VISIBLE
COMFORT	HEADREST	MOVE	SEATPAN	STEERING	WHEEL
DRIVER	HEIGHT	MUSCLE	SELECT	SWAP	WHERE
EGRESS	HIPS	PEDALS	SHIRT	TALL	WORKERS
ERGO	HOLD	POWER	SHOES	TAYLOR'D	
FEET	KNEES				

Carrie and Karen took a trip to Toronto one day. Carrie drove the first 40 km and Karen drove the rest of the way. We arrived in Toronto, stretched and walked around, and saw the most amazing ergo intervention ever, so we decided to go back immediately to share it with the rest of the team. We turned around and headed home on the same road that we used to get there. Carrie drove the first leg of the trip, and Karen drove the last 50 km back to the office. When we got back, Andrew asked, “Who did most of the driving?”

Karen explained, “On the way there, Carrie drove the first 40 km and I drove the rest. On the way back, Carrie drove the first leg of the trip and I drove the last 50 km.”

Who drove the furthest, and how many more kilometers did that person drive?

Karen drove _____ kilometers _____ than Carrie.

E L B I S I V T W S H O P T P T E E L F
T A Y L O R ' D G H S E E N K O E T A R B
A S E R G O L O E I D L O H W E W E O A
L S U N T L U O E A G N I R E E T S L C
M B T C E L E S J A L M D L I G H T F R I E P L K
U W O R K E R S M D O B S S E O H S Y R A G I O R
S H A N D S G S E V A A E L C I H E V T E M H U E
C E M O K R E R E V I R D R E L A X P I B A O T S
L R T R I H S I T F I T T S E R D A E H E R C S T
E E E P T R O F M O C L E A R A N C E P A W S H T



At press time, the details were not quite finalised, but we will let you know where we are in our next newsletter, and on our webpage. After ten years in Ayr, we are excited to be planning a move to an office in Galt. Stay tuned....



Awareness sessions are an integral part of any successful ergonomics program. Short (typically one-hour) presentations on various topics are available to heighten employee interest and understanding. Some companies use the sessions as “lunch’n’learn” sessions, or as “dessert” sessions. Other companies use sessions as part of their safety talks.

Who does what?

We would:

- Prepare any props required
- Prepare our instructor notes and handouts, if desired
- Arrange any props, set up our laptop computer and ensure that the connection works

- Facilitate the session and answer questions. Most sessions are about an hour long. We can run two back-to-back sessions of the same topic, for the same price as one.
- Pack up all materials and return them to the office

You would:

- Notify your employees of the location, time, and date of the session
- Provide a screen and projector, and any other props that the ergonomist requests, and set up the room

What is the cost?

The fee of \$650 includes preparation time in our office, facilitation of the session(s), and an hour of set up/pack up time. We are happy to customise the session at an additional charge. We also charge for mileage and parking, if needed. Some clients choose to keep the ergonomist on-site for the entire day (at a small charge), to assist with chair adjustments, offer verbal suggestions, etc.

Hot topics include:

Ergo for supervisors, Aging: what’s happening to me?, The ABC’s of chair adjustment, Penny (nickel?) solutions for problem offices, Lifting tips and back injury prevention, Stretching, Heat stress prevention, Driver ergo, Developing effective job rotation schedules, Shiftwork, Ergo and design, The economics of ergonomics, and Case studies.

Going back to school in the fall? Check out these courses....

- September 4-5, **Physical Demands Descriptions**
- October 2, **Ergo Design**
- October 24, **Office Ergo**
- November 13, **Lifting Tips Train-the-Trainer**

You can now register *and pay* for these courses through our website at www.taylordergo.com, or print and send in your registration form with a cheque.

